

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY TOKYO

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FOR REGIONAL ATTACHE

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EFIS, JA

SUBJECT: NMFS INTEREST IN PLACING SCIENTIFIC OBSERVERS
ABOARD JAPANESE LONG-LINE VESSELS

1. THE NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE (NMFS) SOUTHEAST
CENTER IN MIAMI IS VERY INTERESTED IN TAKING ADVANTAGE OF
THE CURRENT PRESENCE OF NUMEROUS JAPANESE LONG-LINE
VESSELS IN THE GULF OF MEXICO TO PLACE A SCIENTIFIC
OBSERVER ON TWO OF THESE VESSELS FOR A STAY OF ABOUT 36
HOURS ON EACH VESSEL SOMETIME BETWEEN MAY 10-19, 1977.
THE PROPOSED WORK BY U.S. SCIENTISTS ON THE JAPANESE
LONG-LINE VESSELS IS NOT REPEAT NOT RELATED IN ANY WAY TO
THE U.S. OBSERVER PROGRAM ABOARD FOREIGN VESSELS FISHING
IN THE U.S. 200-MILE FISHERY CONSERVATION ZONE UNDER U.S.
PERMITS. THE COOPERATION OF THE JAPANESE LONG-LINE
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VESSELS WOULD BE PURELY VOLUNTARY. SUCH COOPERATION
WOULD PROVIDE A VERY USEFUL OPPORTUNITY TO COLLECT
SCIENTIFIC DATA ON BLUEFIN TUNA AND BILLFISH, SINCE MAY IS
THE SPAWNING PERIOD FOR BLUEFIN. NMFS REGIONAL OFFICIALS
WITH THE ASSISTANCE OF THE U.S. COAST GUARD PLAN TO MAKE
DIRECT CONTACT WITH THE MASTERS OF THE JAPANESE LONG-LINE
VESSELS IN EFFORTS TO ARRANGE FOR THESE SCIENTIFIC

OBSERVATIONS. PRIOR CONTACTS WITH APPROPRIATE OFFICIALS OF THE JAPANESE FISHERY AGENCY, HOWEVER, COULD BE HELPFUL

IN FACILITATING THIS SCIENTIFIC WORK. THEREFORE, WE WOULD REQUEST THE REGIONAL FISHERIES ATTACHE TO MAKE SUCH CONTACTS DRAWING UPON THE POINTS SET FORTH BELOW. PLEASE ADVISE JAPANESE REACTION BY MAY 3.

(A) THE SOUTHEAST FISHERIES CENTER OF THE NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE (NMFS) IS CURRENTLY CONDUCTING GENERAL STUDIES RELATED TO BLUEFIN TUNA AND BILLFISH IN THE GULF OF MEXICO. THESE STUDIES ALSO RELATE TO INVESTIGATIONS CARRIED OUT PURSUANT TO EFFORTS OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION FOR THE CONSERVATION OF ATLANTIC TUNA (ICCAT) TO STRENGTHEN ITS BASE OF SCIENTIFIC INFORMATION. AS NUMEROUS JAPANESE LONG-LINE VESSELS ARE CURRENTLY OPERATING IN THE GULF OF MEXICO, NMFS HOPES THAT ARRANGEMENTS CAN BE MADE ALLOWING IT TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THIS OPPORTUNITY TO COLLECT SAMPLES AND DATA. THE MONTH OF MAY IS CONSIDERED CRITICAL FOR THIS WORK SINCE IT IS THE SPAWNING PERIOD FOR BLUEFIN TUNA.

(B) ACCORDINGLY, THE NMFS CENTER PROPOSES TO SEEK THE VOLUNTARY COOPERATION OF THE MASTERS OF THE JAPANESE LONG-LINE VESSELS IN PLACING ONE TECHNICIAN ABOARD EACH OF TWO JAPANESE LONG-LINE VESSELS FOR APPROXIMATELY 36 HOURS SOMETIME BETWEEN MAY 10 AND MAY 19, 1977. TRANSFERS WOULD BE ARRANGED BY RADIO COMMUNICATION WITH JAPANESE LONGLINERS ON THE FISHING GROUNDS AND WOULD BE EFFECTED

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USING U.S. COAST GUARD CUTTERS. THE CENTER HAS INDICATED THAT IT WOULD LIKE TO COLLECT THE FOLLOWING SAMPLES AND DATA:

1. FORK LENGTH, SEX RATIO, AND GONAD, OTOLITH AND VERTEBRAE SAMPLES OF BLUEFIN TUNA CAUGHT

2. SPECIES COMPOSITION, LENGTHS AND CONDITION OF BILLFISH CAUGHT

DATA OBTAINED WILL BE A VERY HELPFUL CONTRIBUTION TO U.S. GENERAL STUDIES OF BLUEFIN TUNA AND BILLFISH WHICH WILL BE MADE AVAILABLE TO JAPANESE SCIENTISTS.

(C) NMFS WOULD ALSO APPRECIATE ANY ASSISTANCE THE JAPANESE FISHERY AGENCY CAN PROVIDE IN EXPLAINING THE VALUE OF THIS SCIENTIFIC WORK TO THE JAPANESE FISHING COMPANIES WHOSE LONG-LINE VESSELS WILL BE OPERATING IN THE GULF OF MEXICO DURING THE PERIOD IN QUESTION AND

WHOSE VESSEL OPERATORS MIGHT BE CONTACTED BY NMFS WITH
A VIEW TOWARD ENLISTING THEIR COOPERATION.
CHRISTOPHER

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